

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3535
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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 2595

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, WB, GW
SUBJECT: SCHUETZ REMAINS IN CONTROL OF BERLIN SPD

REF: USBERLIN 2194

1. SINCE REFTEL WAS TRANSMITTED, NUMBER OF EVENTS HAVE
TAKEN PLACE IN BERLIN WHICH SUPPORT MISSION CONCLUSION THAT
SCHUETZ WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE AS GOVERNING MAYOR FOR
FORESEEABLE FUTURE THROUGH ABILITY BALANCE OFF COMPETING
LEFT AND RIGHT FACTIONS OF BERLIN SPD.

2. ONE ELEMENT HAS BEEN APPARENT WILLINGNESS OF CHANCELLOR
SCHMIDT TO FOLLOW HIS OWN ADVICE TO BERLINERS NOT TO
WASH PARTY'S DIRTY LINEN IN PUBLIC. HE HAS NOT BEEN QUOTED
OF LATE OPENLY CRITICIZING SCHUETZ OR BERLIN SOCIALISTS.
MOST SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT, HOWEVER, WAS DECISION ON NOVEMBER
5 BY LEFT-WING OF BERLIN SPD, UNDER LEADERSHIP OF
SENATOR HARRY RISTOCK, TO INITIATE CAMPAIGN OF SUPPORT
FOR SCHUETZ. ACCORDING TO STATEMENTS MADE BY LEFTISTS
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ON THAT OCCASTION, SUCH CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR

BEGINNING OF 1977 BUT INCREASED CRITICISM OF SCHUETZ WITHIN PARTY PROMPTED EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT. (COMMENT: RISTOCK CONTINUES TO ASPIRE TO FILL SCHUETZ' SHOES AS GOVERNING MAYOR BUT BELIEVES IT PRUDENT TO WAIT UNTIL LEFTISTS, WHO NOW COMPRISE APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF BERLIN SPD, HAVE CLEAR MAJORITY. IN INTERIM, RISTOCK BELIEVES THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO SCHUETZ, PARTICULARLY IF SOCIALISTS ARE TO RECOUP IN 1979 ELECTION LOSSES SUFFERED TO CDU IN 1975. END COMMENT).

3. BY EARLY NOVEMBER IT HAD BECOME POPULAR GAMBIT OF LEADING BERLIN SOCIALISTS TO DENY STATEMENTS ABOUT SCHUETZ ATTRIBUTED TO THEM BY JOURNALISTS. THUS IT WAS THAT SENATOR ERICH PAETZOLD, PROMINENT RIGHT-WING BERLIN SOCIALIST, DENIED ON NOVEMBER 4 THAT HE HAD TOLD STERN REPORTER THAT SCHUETZ WAS " UNBEARABLE" AND HAD TO BE REMOVED. ON NOVEMBER 6, STATE SECRETARY MARIE SCHLEI APPEARED AT MEETING OF NEUKOELLN SPD WHERE SHE STATED IN PRESENCE OF SCHUETZ THAT SHE HAD NEVER ATTEMPTED TO UNSEAT HIM AS GOVERNING MAYOR. ON NOVEMBER 8, SPEAKER FOR SPD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ASSERTED THAT THERE WERE NO DOUBTS ABOUT SCHUETZ' LEADERSHIP QUALITIES.

4. SINCE THAT TIME, BERLIN SPD HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET--AT LEAST ON SURFACE. BERLIN SOCIALISTS WITH WHOM MISSION OFFICERS HAVE SPOKEN IN PAST MONTH HAVE ADMITTED THAT WHILE PARTY MEMBERS ARE TRYING TO KEEP THEIR DISPUTES OUT OF PUBLIC EYE, THERE WAS STILL CONSIDERABLE STRAIN WITHIN PARTY ORGANIZATION. ONE PROMINENT SOCIALIST, POLICE PRESIDENT HUEBNER, TOLD MISOFFS ON NOVEMBER 29 THAT AN INDEX TO INNER-PARTY STRIFE WILL BE RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED AT BERLIN SPD PARTEITAG ON DECEMBER 4. SCHUETZ IS TO BE MAIN SPEAKER AT PARTEITAG AND HIS TOPIC IS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF BERLIN, EARLIER IN MONTH, SCHUETZ INTERVENED PERSONALLY TO CHANGE THRUST OF SPD PLANNING DOCUMENT ON DEVELOPMENT WHICH DESCRIBED BERLIN AS POTENTIAL MODEL OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM. HE DID SO, HOWEVER, ONLY AFTER PUBLIC OUTCRY FROM FDP COALITION PARTNER

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MAYOR LUEDER AND AFTER CDU HAD RIDICULED CONCEPT AS DEMONSTRATION OF SPD HUBRIS.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT SCHUETZ WILL CONTINUE TO WEATHER STORMS OF PARTY FACTIONALISM AND BUREACRATIC INEPTITUDE OVER SHORT RUN. COMING MONTHS WILL BE CRUCIAL BOTH IN TERMS OF PARTY WRANGLING AS WELL AS DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS. IF IT APPEARS BY NEXT SUMMER SCHUETZ IS NOT

ABLE TO MASTER THEM, PRESSURE FOR CHANGE OF BERLIN SPD
LEADERSHIP MAY WELL BECOME IRRESISTIBLE.
GEORGE

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